

Introduction

This report is designed to enable health plans, the Medical Assistance Administration (MAA), and other organizations to monitor and evaluate the performance of Medicaid Healthy Options and statewide managed care programs in Washington State. Assessments were based on health care services and experiences of adults and children enrolled in Healthy Options and children enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). This report describes the background of the Medicaid Consumer Assessment of Health Plan (CAHPS) survey, the goals of the project, and how survey results may be interpreted by consumers, health plans, and other stakeholders.

Project Background

The CAHPS survey tools were developed under cooperative agreements among Harvard Medical School, the RAND Institute, the Research Triangle Institute, and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. A version of CAHPS has been implemented in Washington State by MAA for five years. In CAHPS surveys, respondents provide information about their experiences with and evaluations of various aspects of medical care, including:

- Getting care that is needed
- Getting care without long waits
- How well doctors communicate
- Courtesy, respect, and helpfulness of office staff
- Health plan customer service and paperwork
- Family-centered care
- Overall satisfaction ratings

Questions related to family-centered care were added in year 2001. In particular, questions were designed to learn about the experiences around patient and provider decision-making and choices.

A copy of the survey instrument is available by calling Becky McAninch-Dake, CAHPS Coordinator at (360) 725-1622, or by sending an e-mail request to mcanibj@dshs.wa.gov. Trend data over the past five years is also available from Ms. McAninch-Dake.

Project Goals

The primary goal of the Medicaid CAHPS project is to provide timely information to clients to assist them in choosing their health plan. This information was collected through mail and telephone surveys that assessed clients' experiences with the health care and services they received through Healthy Options and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

An additional goal has been the refinement of methods for sharing CAHPS survey results with clients to assist them in selecting a health care plan. Results of this year's CAHPS survey results were included in the year 2002 Medicaid client enrollment materials.